

Price  
1961

Statement of Calvin A. Behle  
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Gentlemen of the Utah Water & Power Board:

On behalf of United States Steel Corporation which operates the latest, but certainly we hope not the last, major industrial plant in Carbon County, I recall keenly the meeting before your Board some three years ago at Price when we were in the course of planning and constructing the Wellington Coal-Washing Plant. At that time we stressed the vital importance of a firm water supply as a condition precedent to the construction of that plant; and some of the difficulties we had encountered in developing that firm water supply in an area where earlier optimistic waterfall estimates had not matured as a result of subsequent years' actual experience.

We then protested along with other Carbon County users -- as we do again today -- against any impairment of the existing Price River water rights by transmountain or other diversion; and stated, as we do again today, that United States Steel Corporation must protect its water supply by appropriate action, including litigation when necessary.

As you know, this 13-story high plant at Wellington was designed to perform the important function of washing, sizing and drying Utah coal in order to feed the coke ovens at Geneva in Utah County, where the iron ores from Iron County are turned into steel. Today that operation -- with a normal capacity for treating 600 tons of coal per hour -- mined in principal part by some 800 employees in Carbon and Emery Counties, is in actual operation.

But despite our acquisition of the oldest decreed right on Price River, and our supplementation of that right by approved applications for all other possible

available water in the plant vicinity, this summer we were forced to operate on the sewage out-fall from Price, Helper and Wellington because of the general water shortage in the entire area. Consequently, you may imagine our reaction to a proposition that on its face would impair the largest private payroll in the State of Utah, and the livelihood of some seven thousand Utah employees, by a project based upon transmountain diversion of waters contributing to the Price River system. Again, we must state unequivocally our intention to protect with all appropriate action this \$40,000,000 annual Utah payroll and any infringement of the water rights upon which this important segment of United States Steel Corporation's Utah Operations is based.

Yet this conflict has a ready solution. Of this I am convinced after careful study of the situation over a three-year period and from my conversations with Sanpete County representatives who time and again have assured us that they have no such intention of impairing existing water rights. That solution is the simple one of requesting this Board -- in hope of avoiding otherwise costly and bitter litigation, to refer the basic data with respect to available water and existing water rights to a committee of competent and independent engineers. Such a committee could quite readily advise us all whether the engineers of the Bureau of Reclamation, of Kaiser and Geneva, of Utah Power & Light, together with Mr. Templeton and Mr. Monson, are correct in their statements that there is no available water as a practical matter for a multimillion dollar transmountain diversion project. If so, this should end the matter. But if there is sufficient available unappropriated water, United States Steel Corporation for one would not oppose its badly needed use by Sanpete County.

So we conclude by reiterating again: Utah's largest private payroll should not be impaired. United States Steel Corporation must take all appropriate steps to keep that operation, the Wellington Coal-Washing Plant, functioning as an integral part of the economy of Utah and the West. But this suggestion which we now make may afford a prompt, practical, and equitable basis to avoid the cost and bitterness of litigation, and bring the citizens of Utah back together again in mutual efforts to develop still further the sound economy of our State.

Salt Lake City, Utah  
November 16, 1961